



The Spectacle

From the Office Down the Hall

Something magical happened last week in the swampy wilds of Arkansas, but it went largely unnoticed here at Arlington House—or anywhere else for that matter. A lone researcher spotted an unusual bird. This is a fact that, unless you are a bird watcher, you may have ignored as mildly interesting, but largely unimportant. But this bird, the “Lord God Bird” as it was sometimes called, shares something in common with Robert E. Lee: it has been gone a long time.

At some moment in time, along about April 19, 1861, Robert E. Lee stopped pacing and wrote two lines that removed him from the US Army. Soon after that, there was another moment when he stepped over the threshold, leaving Arlington for the last time. It is unclear whether he saw Arlington again only once, or if he might have seen it twice from a train. None-the-less, we can say with certainty that, at some point, he saw it for the last time. Because that is the nature of time and events. There is always a first time, and consequently, there is always a last time, a moment that then falls extinct from the river of events in which we swim.

And so to understand what happened, to know Lee’s expression as the train trundled past Arlington, we must search for evidence of these extinct events. More specific than historians, we become “momentologists” and sift the bones of events to resurrect them as a Tyrannosaurus is assembled in a museum. And this is not always an easy thing to do. Early on, the Tyrannosaurus was articulated as a tall, but shambling monster. More recently, paleontologists have reassessed the evidence and reassembled these giant lizard bones as a sleek and very quick horizontal runner. But we may never



Arlington House

know what color they were. But what if someone were to see one, catch a glimpse, even if only from a train? Suddenly we could color the bones and order them correctly. We could see what thoughts lay behind their (yellow?) eyes. Similarly, what if someone—certainly unexpectedly—were to catch a fleeting glimpse of Lee as he rode Traveler across a field? While this would be headline news (“Long Dead American Leader Spotted in Richmond!”), what difference would this discovery make to history? How would it change our understanding of Lee?

A visitor asked me, “what color were Lee’s eyes?” I’ve been asked countless times how tall was he? How big were his feet? There are paintings and boots and even photographs that will help us answer these questions. But

more important to us, perhaps, is his character. With only scant letters, photos and some boots, how do we know that we have reassembled him correctly when we talk to visitors? We know much of what he did, but not so much of *how* he did it. Perhaps more important than his height, would be to know whether he made a fist when he was angry, or if he scratched his ear when he was perplexed. When Lee laughed, what did it sound like? If we could see him pace, his steps measured or quick, we would get a much better *sense* of the man and his struggles. But he is long gone, and we can only guess at these things now.

So when I heard that a team had not only

(continued on page 4)

Area Special Events

May 1

Artillery demonstrations at Fort Washington Park, MD (I-495, exit 3A). 1, 2 and 3 pm. Free with park admission. 301-763-4600 or www.nps.gov/fowa

Battlefield hike, "Full Battlefield Hike," the entire Antietam National Battlefield, MD in a two-part hike beginning at the visitor center at 9:30 am. Ends 4:15 pm. Free with park admission. www.nps.gov/anti or 301-432-5124.

Living history encampments at the Pennsylvania Memorial Spangler's Spring, Gettysburg National Park, PA. Free. 717-338-9114 or www.nps.gov/gett.

Walking tour, "Civil War Encampment and Freedman's Farm," on the grounds of Montpelier, James Madison's home near Orange, VA. 2 pm. Free with admission. www.montpelier.org or 540-672-2728.

Civil War Fashion Show and Tea at the Staunton River Battlefield State Park (Mulberry Hill Plantation) near Randolph, VA. 2-5 pm. Free. 434-454-4312 or www.stauntonriverbattlefield.org.

May 6-8

Bus tour, "1865: Petersburg and Appomattox - The Final Battles of the Petersburg Campaign," sponsored by Pamplin Historical Park, south of Petersburg, VA. Reservations required. 877-PAMPLIN or www.pamplinpark.org.

Tour and living history programs commemorating the anniversary of the Battle of the Wilderness near Fredericksburg, VA. Bus tour, speakers and more. Sponsored by the Fredericksburg National Park and the Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield. 540-373-6122 or 540-786-2880 or see www.nps.gov/frsp or www.fowb.org.

Living history and reenactment, "Dixie Days." Features military demonstrations and other living history and a reenactment of the Battle of Bethesda Church at Pole Green

Park near Mechanicsville, VA northeast of Richmond. Details: 804-512-7210 or www.coldharborguards.com.

May 7

Tour, "Doors Open Gettysburg," (PA) eight rarely open historic buildings on the battlefield and in town. Free. Info: Friends of the Parks at Gettysburg, 717-334-0772.

Special program, "The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln," at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, MD. On the hour 11 am-3 pm. Free with admission. 301-695-1864 or www.civilwarmed.org.

Living history walking tour, "Olde Towne History Trail." Meet Portsmouth's (VA) historical characters including Civil War. 11 am-6 pm. Fee charged. 757-714-2343.

May 7-8

Living history encampment at the Carroll County Farm Museum, 500 S Center St in Westminster, MD, includes Sunday fashion show (12:30 pm). 10 am-5 pm both days. \$3 adult. 410-876-2667 or email ccfarm@carr.org.

Special program, "A Call to Arms," special two-hour program for kids (ages 8-14) at the Monocacy National Battlefield near Frederick, MD. 10 am and 1:30 pm. Free. Reservations required. 301-662-3515 or www.nps.gov/mono.

May 8

Special program, "Bike Through History," covers the entire nine-mile Antietam National Park, MD tour road. Begins 9 am at the visitor center. Ends 1 pm. Free with park admission. www.nps.gov/anti or 301-432-5124.

Free tours of the Stonewall Jackson House in Lexington, VA for those who were born in the house (when it was a hospital) and their mothers. More info: 540-463-2552 or www.stonewalljackson.org.

Reenactment and living history in McDowell, VA. Lectures, demonstrations and much more at this semi-annual event. Proceeds benefit the new Highland County Museum. Battle at 4 pm. More info: highlandhistoricalsociety.com or 540-468-3165.

May 13

10th Anniversary commemoration of the opening of the Lee's Retreat Driving Tour at Fork Inn, west of Petersburg, VA on Route 460. 1 pm. Reception follows speeches. Free. Public invited.

May 14

Civil War Book Sale: Reference, classics, regimentals and more at Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site in Alexandria, VA. Sales benefit the site. 10 am-3 pm. Details: 703-838-4848.

Special tour of Liberia Mansion, part of the Manassas (VA) Museum System. Behind-the-scenes look at the restoration process from top to bottom. Noon-4 pm. \$25. www.manassasmuseum.org or 703-368-1873.

Bus tour, "In the Steps of Robert Sneden, Part II," visits Peninsula Campaign and Seven Days Battles sites. Leaves from Lee Hall Mansion in Newport News, VA. 9 am-5 pm. \$45. Reservations. 757-888-3371.

Tour, "Impregnable Works or Wretchedly Defective Line?" Historian-led walking tour of the Spotsylvania battlefield works near Fredericksburg, VA. 1-4 pm. Free. Meets at Bloody Angle parking lot. 540-373-6122 or www.nps.gov/frsp.

May 14-15

Special living history program, "Cavaliers, Courage and Coffee: The Night Belonged to Mosby." Walking tours of Atoka, VA a familiar place to John Singleton Mosby between Middleburg and Upperville on Route 50. Lantern tour Saturday begins at 8 pm, Sunday tours begin 3 pm. Sponsored by the Mosby Heritage Area. Tours begin at the

Area Special Events (continued)

Caleb Rector House. Free, donations welcome. 540-687-6681 or www.mosbyheritagearea.org.

Anniversary living history and ranger programs at Drewry's Bluff, part of the Richmond National Battlefield Park, VA. 10 am-5 pm Saturday, 10 am-4 pm Sunday. Free. 804-226-1981 or www.nps.gov/rich.

Reenactment of the Battle of New Market at the New Market Battlefield State Historical Park, VA. Battles each day on the original battlefield. Details: 866-515-1864 or www.vmi.edu/newmarket.

Living history, "Camp Curtin Days," camp life represented at the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, PA. Noon-5 pm. Free with admission. 717-260-1861 or www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org.

Living history encampment at the Pennsylvania Memorial, Gettysburg National Park, PA. Free. www.nps.gov/gett or 717-338-9114 or .



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arlington House was the home of Robert E. Lee and his family for thirty years and is uniquely associated with the Washington and Custis families. It is now preserved as a memorial to General Lee, who gained the respect of Americans in both the North and the South.

Arlington House
The Robert E. Lee Memorial
c/o George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

Phone
703-235-1530

Web Site
<http://www.nps.gov/arho>

The Spectacle online
<http://www.nps.gov/arho/tour/spectacle.html>

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

May 15
New Market Day: Ceremony and parade at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, VA. Event honors the cadets killed in the 1864 battle. 2 pm. Free. 540-463-3777 or www.lexingtonvirginia.com.

Walking tour, "The Lincoln Assassination," two-hour tour begins at the Jackson statue, Lafayette Square, Washington, DC. 11 am. \$15. Reservations not necessary. info@dcsightseeing.com or 301-294-9514.

May 20-21
Seminar, "Smokestacks & Pivot Guns" with focus on Civil War navies, at the Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke, VA. Topics include Secretaries of the Navy for both sides, Battle of the Ironclads and the Battle of Mobile Bay. \$95 includes all seminar lectures and box lunch. Sponsored by the Roanoke Civil War Round Table. More info: 540-563-9034, 540-580-7786, or email dolace@infionline.net.

May 20-22
North-South Skirmish Association's National Competition at Fort Shenandoah near Winchester, VA. Live-fire competitions featuring all variety of vintage weapons. Free. More info: www.n-ssa.org or 248-447-5909.

May 21
Living history, "Life in the Officers' Hut," Civil War soldier life demonstrations and escorted tours of the fort at Fort Ward in Alexandria, VA. 11 am-3 pm. Free. 703-838-4848 or www.fortward.org.

"The Lincoln Symposium" lectures, living history, refreshments included, in Chambersburg, PA. Details: 717-264-7101 or email chaden@chambersburg.org.

Special program, "Maine Camp & Hospital Association at the Pry House Field Hospital Museum on the Antietam Battlefield near Sharpsburg, MD. Operations of a civilian relief society during the war in cooperation with the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick. 11 am-3 pm.

301-695-1864 or www.civilwarmed.org.

May 21-22
Living history encampments at the Pennsylvania Memorial and demonstrations on Little Round Top and at the Angle (May 21), Gettysburg National Park, PA. Free. 717-338-9114 or www.nps.gov/gett.

Living history, "Command the Heights: The Maryland Heights Naval Battery," join volunteers for a hike to Maryland Heights, part of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, WV. Free with admission. 304-535-6029 or www.nps.gov/hafe.

Living history and reenactment, The Battle of Lewisburg." WV. Living history encampments, children's activities, ladies' tea, historical impressions, and speakers. Skirmish Saturday and battle reenactment on the same streets as the 1862 battle on Sunday. Free. More info: www.battleoflewisburg.org or 304-645-6910.

Special program, "Getting the Message Through," Signal Corps activities with simultaneous demonstrations at Washington Monument State Park (South Mountain) near Boonsboro and the Antietam National Battlefield, MD. 1 pm both days. Free. 301-432-8065.

Living history, military demonstrations and encampment at the Steppingstone Museum in Havre de Grace, MD. Fee charged. 888-419-1762 or www.steppingstonemuseum.org.

Open house, free tours of the Surratt House Museum in Clinton, MD. Noon-4 pm. Details: www.surratt.org or 301-868-1121.

Reenactment and living history weekend at Fort Pocahontas on the James River. Encampments, battles, tours, demonstrations, Saturday evening entertainment and much more at this annual event on the Sherwood Forest Plantation off Route 5, southeast of Richmond, VA. Fee charged. More info: Call 804-829-9722 or www.fortpocahontas.org.

Area Special Events (continued)

May 22

Special program, "Occupation Day." Rangers discuss the occupation of Arlington House (now in Arlington National Cemetery, VA) and surrounding area by the US Army in 1861. Free. 703-235-1530 or www.nps.gov/arho.

May 25-28

Conference, "African Americans in the Civil War," in Petersburg, VA. Sponsored by the NPS, Pamplin Historical Park, the City of Petersburg and Virginia State University. Reservations, information: 804-732-3571 extension 105.

May 25-29

Conference, "The Campaign and Battle of Spotsylvania," tours and programs led by Gary Gallagher and James McPherson, headquartered in Richmond, VA. Sponsored by the University of Virginia. Complete details: www.uvatravellern.org or call 800-346-3882.

May 27-30

Tour, Antietam (MD), includes South Mountain and Harpers Ferry. A Civil War Weekend Tour. \$595 per person includes upscale lodging (double occupancy), tour and most meals. www.civilwarweekend.com or 866-CWW-TOUR.

May 28

Luminaria, annual memorial event at the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, VA. More than 15,000 candles commemorate each soldier burial. 8-11 pm. Free. 540-373-6122 or www.nps.gov/frsp.

May 28-29

Special programs and exhibits, "Defend and Protect: Arming the American Soldier," features the armory at the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, WV. Plus brass band performance. Free with admission. 304-535-6029 or www.nps.gov/hafe.

Living history encampments at Gen. Meade's Headquarters and Spangler's Spring, Gettysburg National Park, PA. Free. 717-338-9114 or www.nps.gov/gett.

Civil War Weekend at the Yorktown unit of the Colonial National Historical Park, VA. Annual event includes living history demonstrations, encampments, ranger programs and a medical program. Free with park fee. www.nps.gov/colo or 757-898-3400.

May 29

Walking tour, "In the Footsteps of Soldiers," guided tour of the Turner's and Fox's Gap battlefields on South Mountain (near Boonsboro), MD. Meets at Fox's Gap (Reno Monument Road). 2 pm. Free. 301-432-8065.

Walking tour, "Capital of the Confederacy," includes downtown Richmond, VA sites. Meets at the Valentine Richmond History Center, 1015 E. Clay St. 2-4 pm. \$7. 804-649-0711 or www.richmondhistorycenter.com.

Confederate Memorial Day service at the Old City Cemetery in Lynchburg, VA. 3 pm. Free. www.gravegarden.org or 434-847-1465.

May 30

Memorial Day ceremonies at the Manassas(VA)National Battlefield. Noon at Groveton Cemetery (Confederate) and 1 pm at the New York Monument (Union). 703-361-1339 or www.nps.gov/mana.

Memorial Day ceremony at the Fort Harrison National Cemetery, off Route 5, southeast of Richmond, VA. Noon. Free. 804-226-1981 or www.nps.gov/rich.

Tour and ceremony, "Where Valor Sleeps" at the Fredericksburg (VA)National Cemetery 9-10:30 am. Followed by formal ceremony. Free. 540-373-6122 or www.nps.gov/frsp.

Memorial Day Parade in Gettysburg, PA followed by ceremony at the Soldiers' National Cemetery. 2 pm. 717-334-1124.

From the Office Down the Hall (continued)

seen, but even video-taped an Ivory Billed Woodpecker, presumed extinct for over 60 years now, I was dumbfounded. Sure, there are specimens in museums, their bones and feathers reassembled as best we can, but no one can make these fly. This discovery is a precious gift from the past. When Lee traveled to Texas, he may have seen a Lord God Bird. And now we may get to see one, too.

Kendell Thompson,
Site Manager
Arlington House,
The Robert E. Lee Memorial

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER

Please contact Delphine Gross no later than the 20th of each month with availability dates and times to be posted the following month (Please call by May 20th with June information). Even if you are a regularly scheduled VIP please contact Delphine to confirm your availability. Again, the contact number is (703) 235-1530 ext. 227. Please leave the dates and times you are available on the voice mail. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Cemetery Parking Passes to Expire

Please check the expiration date on your cemetery parking pass. Many of our parking passes will expire in April. If your pass will soon expire, please return your old parking pass to Mary Ratiff. She will issue you a new pass. You will need to give information about your car: make, model, and tag number. If have any question please call Delphine at (703) 235-1530.

Significant Historic Events in May

May 1858

Robert E. Lee supervised the planting of the Arlington corn crop, “his first big venture as a farmer.”

May 1, 1838

Lieutenant Lee returned to his duties in St. Louis, Missouri, bringing with him Mrs. Lee, Custis and Rooney from Arlington.

May 2, 1861

From Richmond, Lee wrote to the Rev. Cornelius Walker, “I shall need all your good wishes and all your prayers for strength and guidance in the struggle in which we are engaged and earnestly and humbly look for help to him alone who can save us and who has permitted the dire calamity of this fratricidal war to impend over us. If we are not worthy that it should pass from us, may he in his great mercy shield us from its dire effects and save us from the calamity our sins have produced.”

To his wife, Lee wrote:

“...I want you to be in a place of safety...Nor can any one say where safety can be found...Make your preparations quickly to be ready for any emergency...”

“I have just received Custis’s letter of the 30th enclosing the acceptance of my resignation. It is stated it will take effect on the 25th of April.

May 3, 1861

It was probably on the afternoon of Friday, May 3 (or possibly Saturday, May 4) that Mrs. Lee, sitting in the morning room copying an oil portrait of her youngest son, was surprised by Orton Williams with the news that United States troops would cross the Long Bridge and take possession of Arlington Heights.

“Now the moment she had long dreaded was upon her. Heartsick, she and her daughters set the servants [slaves] to packing. First off, she had the family silver packed in sturdy boxes to be dispatched to Richmond early next morning. Next she stowed the

Washington and Custis family letters and papers, together with some smaller mementoes and valuables, in another box; her husband’s papers went into still another.”

May 4, 1861

Early in the morning, Orton Williams returned and told Mrs. Lee that the planned movement of United States troop into Virginia had been postponed, but that she should continue to prepare for the inevitable.

May 4, 1864

The Army of the Potomac, commanded by General Ulysses S. Grant, crossed the Rapidan River. “It was the beginning of the big Federal push in Virginia that culminated in the siege of Petersburg and finally Appomattox.”

May 5, 1861

Mrs. Lee, writing to her 16-year-old daughter, Mildred, told her that she would not leave Arlington “even if the whole Northern Army were to surround it” except to relieve the minds of her husband and oldest son and “leave them free to perform their duty.” Her frustration was directed at the leaders of the United States government, who, she said, seemed to be “without honor & without pity.” The silver and valuables had been sent to Richmond and to Ravensworth, but “the rest of our effects must take their chance.”

May 9, 1846

GWP Custis wrote Francis Nelson, the manager of his Pamunkey properties, urging him to expand fishing operations on the estates because the canals and railroad had contributed to an increased demand for fish.

May 9, 1861

The New York Daily Tribune named Robert E. Lee to its list of “ingrates and traitors.”

The article mentioned Lee’s connection to the family of George Washington and speculated that if GWP Custis were still alive, “He would have good cause to be bowed down in grief and sorrow to behold his son-

in-law following in the footsteps of Benedict Arnold!”

Mrs. Lee, writing to her husband in Richmond, told him that all their wine, stores, and pictures, as well as the piano, had been sent to Ravensworth. Other valuables had been sent to Richmond. Arlington, she said, was never “more beautiful, perfectly radiant. The yellow jasmine in full bloom & perfuming the air, but a death like stillness prevails everywhere, you hear no sounds from Washington, not a soul is moving about.”

May 10, 1842

GWP Custis participated in the 200th anniversary of celebration of the first settlement of Maryland at St. Mary’s. As the guest of the Philodemic Society and faculty of Georgetown College, Custis composed a poem for the occasion, highly sympathetic to the Catholic founders, which was designed to be sung to the tune of the “Star Spangled Banner.” “When the crowd demanded an encore, he got his friend, Father George Fenwick of Georgetown College, and a granddaughter of Charles Carroll to assist him, and together, the three sang the ode...”

May 10, 1861

“The Confederate government in Montgomery placed Virginia Maj. Gen. Robert E. Lee in command of Confederate troops in Virginia.”

May 10, 1863

Stonewall Jackson died of pneumonia after the amputation of his arm. The next day, Lee wrote his son, Custis, in Richmond, “You will have heard of the death of General Jackson. It is a terrible loss. I do not know how to replace him. Any victory would be dear at such a cost. But God’s will be done.”

May 10, 1865

Confederate President Jefferson Davis was captured by United States troops near Irwinville, Georgia, and the confederate government ceased to exist. President

Significant Historic Events in May (continued)

Andrew Johnson proclaimed armed resistance to the United States government virtually at an end.

May 11, 1861

Lee, writing from Richmond, again admonished his wife to “complete your arrangements & retire further from the scene of war. It may burst upon you at any time.....It is sad to think of the translation, if not ruin it may bring upon a spot so endeared to us. But God’s will be done. We must be resigned.”

Mrs. Lee wrote her daughter Mildred, who was attending Mrs. Powell’s School in Winchester,” I must confess I was both hurt & mortified that a daughter of mine, at a time when her Father’s life is in peril, her home in danger of being trampled over by a lawless foe, if not leveled to the ground, should allow a disappointment about a bonnet to be so deep in her mind...”

May 11, 1911

The tombstone that now marks the grave of Pierre Charles L’Enfant was dedicated with President William Howard Taft presiding. “By an Act of Congress, the stone was designed and sculpted as a belated tribute to L’Enfant. The focal point of the monument is the reproduction of L’Enfant’s original plan for the city sculpted into the white marble top. Accompanying the map on top of the stone is a tribute to L’Enfant: ‘Engineer—Artist—Soldier.’”

May 12, 1861

In a letter to her husband, Mrs. Lee suggested fortifying the “Culvert” at Arlington against a Federal invasion, and said that Custis had laughed at her suggestions. “The last ten days have seemed an age of agony & suspense. Oh, that something bright should dawn upon us.”

May 13, 1832

Startled by the news that his wife was expecting her first child, Robert E. Lee wrote Mary, “Take care of yourself. Don’t ride on horseback, or go into crowds, or hurry about the house.” Despite Mrs. Custis’s beliefs about church going, Lee told his wife not to

go to church: “Suppose the carriage was to break down, what would you do then?”

May 13, 1864

Private William Christman, a farmer from Pennsylvania and a member of the 76th Pennsylvania Infantry, became the first soldier to be buried at Arlington—more than a month before the cemetery was officially authorized on June 15. The first Confederate soldier, L. Reinhart of the 23rd North Carolina, was buried at Arlington a few days later.

May 15, 1861

Mrs. Lee and Custis Lee probably left Arlington to join the Lee girls at “Ravensworth,” Fairfax County, Virginia, the home of Mrs. Lee’s Aunt, Anna Maria Goldsborough Fitzhugh.

May 16, 1862

During the Peninsular Campaign, General George McClellan established his personal headquarters at the White House estate, the property of the Lee family on the Pamunkey River.

May 21, 1830

William Henry Fitzhugh, brother of Mary Lee Fitzhugh Custis and brother-in-law of GWP Custis, died as a result of a fall from a horse. Always a strong supporter of the American Colonization Society, he had given much of his time in recent years to educating his slaves for their eventual freedom, and in his will, he directed that they be freed by 1850 and that those who consented to go to Africa be given their passage and a bonus besides.” There were no children, so his widow, Anna Maria Goldsborough, received a life estate in his property with the remainder to his niece, Mary Custis.

May 23, 1861

Virginia voters ratified the Ordinance of Secession which had been passed by the Virginia secession convention on April 17. The margin of victory for ratification was more than 6 to 1.

May 24, 1861

Beginning on the night of May 23, United States troops crossed the Potomac at Washington and occupied the Virginia shore, fanning out toward Alexandria. A regiment of Zouaves crossed by boat to Alexandria, itself. The Virginia ends of the bridges were seized, and by sunrise, fortifications were going up. The occupation was accomplished with only one military casualty, that of 24-year-old Colonel Elmer Ellsworth, a friend of President Lincoln, who was shot by a civilian, James Jackson, for hauling down a Confederate flag that had been flying over the hotel. Both Ellsworth and the hotel keeper (who was also immediately killed) became martyrs to their respective sections.

May 25, 1861

Brigadier General Samuel P. Heintzelman rode over from Alexandria to Arlington House. The slaves told him that “pictures and most of the furniture” had been removed. Poet Charles Russell Lowell also visited and claimed to have dined at Arlington House on “corn pone and milk.”

May 26, 1831

Robert E. Lee wrote to his brother Carter and asked him to get his wedding clothes in New York. “I believe I will wear my uniform coat on the important night, & therefore white pantaloons must be in character...Let the material of all be the best & don’t let him charge too much.”

May 26, 1861

The Eighth New York Regiment occupied “the grounds and residence” of Arlington. A letter to their commander, General C.W. Sandford, noted that their camp was “situated at the rear of the mansion, amid a beautiful grove of oaks...” and “commands a splendid view of the Potomac and the City of Washington.”

The overseer, McQuinn, complained to General Heintzelman “with tears in his eyes that some volunteers had shot his pet rabbits & chickens & frightened his wife.”

(continued on page 7)

History Happenings

“Some little personal matters are all that remains.”

Mrs. Custis to Mrs. Lee August 19, 1848

Have you ever considered how you will bequeath your belongings? In 1848, Mrs. Custis wrote a letter to her daughter which served as a de facto will. The letter begins with a reminder that “the little sum for special purposes” had all been appropriated. She then proceeded to divide her possessions. To her eldest granddaughter, she left a glass heirloom which had been her mother’s. “Anny” received a clock, and Agnes inherited a bookcase. For her “beloved grandsons” Mrs. Custis had “nothing but my blessings, unless it be a division of my few books as you think best.”

Several of the slaves were to receive her clothing. Eleanor was

to have “my best merino cloak with any one of my dresses she may prefer or you may think best.” She then selected Selina and Judy respectively to receive her next two most valuable dresses, along with a shawl for each. For the rest of the slaves “who are living respectably” Mrs. Lee was to use her judgment to as to the distribution of her mother’s remaining wardrobe.

Robert E. Lee received a ring with General Washington’s hair. To her daughter, Mrs. Custis bequeathed “the few articles of gold containing the hair of my parents and sisters.” These few items represented the bulk of Mrs. Custis’ personal possessions. “All else I suppose is Your Father’s and will of course devolve to his children and grandchildren,” she stated to Mrs. Lee. In keeping with her values, Mrs. Custis saved what she

believed was her most important bequest for last. “May Heaven bless you all my beloved ones with all spiritual blessings of more value than thousands of gold and silver.”



Significant Historic Events in May (continued)

May 29, 1865

“By Presidential Proclamation, Andrew Johnson granted amnesty and pardon to all persons who directly or indirectly participated in “the existing rebellion” with a few exceptions. All property rights were restored except as to slaves and in special cases. An oath was required that such persons would “henceforth fully support, protect, and defend the Constitution and to abide by the laws.”

“This was a declaration for Lee, who had been waiting before deciding whether he would take the oath. The statement of the President’s intentions greatly relieved General Lee’s mind. It opened a way, he

thought, for the South’s recovery. If the states of the former Confederacy could regain the places they had held before 1861, they would be safe from rule by soldiers or by blacks. The future of the restored nation would then be bright.”

May 30, 1837

William Henry Fitzhugh “Rooney” Lee was born at Arlington, the third child and second son of Robert and Mary Lee. This time, Mary Lee had none of the complications that accompanied the birth of her daughter, Mary, two years prior to Rooney’s birth.

May 31, 1862

During the Battle of Seven Pines (Fair Oaks), Virginia, General Joseph E. Johnston was severely wounded. President Jefferson Davis immediately assigned Robert E. Lee as his successor. For the first time, Lee was given command of a major army, the Army of Northern Virginia.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

The Robert E. Lee Family Cooking and Housekeeping Book by Anne Carter Zimmer, great granddaughter of Robert E. Lee and Mary Custis Lee, contains many recipes for sweets including cakes, puddings, custards and other dessert recipes. Many of the recipes in the book were given to Mrs. Lee by relatives and friends, and when an attribution is possible, Mrs. Zimmer includes the information in her book. The original collection of recipes often however only lists the recipe itself with no clue as to the origin as in the following instance. Mrs. Zimmer writes:

Sweet-Meat Pudding

Here “meat” harks back to the Middle Ages, when it meant food as distinguished from drink. At the time of the Washington manuscript *, sweetmeats could be dry, such as candied fruit, or wet, like the jam or preserves called for here. The receipt, even sketchier than most, leaves much room for interpretation. It could be an intensely sweet soufflé (another form of pudding), easily made but quick to fall, since it lacks a stabilizer such as flour. Served with unsweetened raspberry puree, it is tasty and trendy, but probably does not resemble the Lees’, which makes no mention of such a sauce. Fallen, I learned thanks to some very late dinner guests, it becomes sinfully sweet, delicious, and unlike anything any of us had ever tasted before. But whether that is what the Lees served I cannot say.

Use a light-colored jelly or jam (English marmalade adds a welcome bitterness); dark ones turn grayish. Buttering and sugaring the dish adds a nice crunch. The nutmeg, though nice, is unnecessary; it gets somewhat lost. Half of the receipt serves only 4 if everyone has seconds, as they did at my house.

To 10 Eggs allow 2 cups of sugar 2 cups of any preserves, & 1 cup melted butter.

Beat the yolks and sugar together & the whites separately—Add a little nut-meg & bake in a dish (bake quickly)

Half quantity:

5 eggs

1 c. sugar

1 c. apricot or other light-colored preserves or English marmalade, melted with 1/2c. butter

1/4-1/2 t. nutmeg, if desired

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Butter and sugar a 7 to 9 inch soufflé dish. Separate eggs. Beat egg yolks very light. If using nutmeg, sift together with the sugar and add to yolks gradually, beating continuously. Fold in butter-and-preserve mixture. Beat egg whites stiff and fold in. Bake immediately until puffed and lightly browned, about 25 minutes. Serve immediately, as a soufflé with raspberry puree, or allow to cool and fall.

* Editor’s note: This refers to the collection of recipes Martha Washington handed down to Nellie Custis Lewis available today as *Martha Washington’s Booke of Cookery*.

Additional Volunteer Opportunities

Arlington House Woodlands Rescue —

Volunteers are needed to help eradicate invasive, exotic plants from the Arlington House Woodlands, an uncut vestige of forest George Washington Parke Custis set aside in 1802. Beginning at 9 a.m., work teams will remove invasive exotic plants. This event will be held the third Saturday of the month from April to October.

Saturday, May 21, 2005

Saturday, June 18, 2005

Saturday, July 16, 2005

Saturday, August 20, 2005

Saturday, September 17, 2005

Saturday, October 15, 2005

Garden Volunteer Work Days at Arlington

House—Arlington House seeks Garden Clubs (and other groups) to co-sponsor garden work days at Arlington House.

Garden Club work days will give Garden Clubs (and other groups) members an

opportunity to volunteer their special skills, while enjoying the company and companionship of friends, acquaintances, and other gardeners. It is essential that the volunteers be experienced gardeners with detailed knowledge of gardening and plants.

Garden Volunteer Work Days will be held on Saturday mornings. If your group is interested in volunteering, please call Delphine Gross at 703 235-1530 ext 227 or e-mail Delphine_Gross@nps.gov

May 2005

Arlington House VIP Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30	2 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	3 Kathie Lipovac 12:30-4:30 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	4 Jack McKay 9:30-12:30 Arlene Riley 2:00-4:00	5 Charlotte Needham and Elaine Street 10:30-1:00 Gene Cross 11:00-4:30 Amanda Bennett 1:00-4:00	6 Joan Cashell 9:30-11:30	7 Lisa Kittinger 12:00-3:30
8 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30	9 Jo Schoolfield 10:00-2:00 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	10 Kathie Lipovac 12:30-4:30 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	11 Jack McKay 9:30-12:30 Arlene Riley 2:00-4:00	12 Elaine Street 10:30-1:00 Gene Cross 11:00-4:30	13 Joan Cashell 9:30-11:30	14 Elene Paul 10:00-2:00
15 J.B. McCraw 9:30-1:00 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30 Delia Rios 2:30-4:30	16 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	17 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	18 Jack McKay 9:30-12:30 Arlene Riley 2:00-4:00	19 Charlotte Needham and Elaine Street 10:30-1:00 Gene Cross 11:00-4:30	20 Joan Cashell 9:30-11:30 Amanda Bennett 1:00-4:00	21 Delia Rios 11:30-1:30
22 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30	23 Jo Schoolfield 10:00-2:00 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	24 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	25 Jack McKay 9:30-12:30 Arlene Riley 2:00-4:00	26 Charlotte Needham and Elaine Street 10:30-1:00 Gene Cross 11:00-4:30	27 Joan Cashell 9:30-11:30 Amanda Bennett 1:00-4:00	28 Vanna Lewis 10:00-4:30
29 J.B. McCraw 9:30-1:00 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30 Delia Rios 1:30-3:30	30 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	31 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00				

If you are available to volunteer, but are not on the calendar please call Delphine so you can be added to the schedule.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arlington House
The Robert E. Lee Memorial
c/o George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

<<Name>>
<<Address>>
<<CityStateZip>>

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The Spectacle is a monthly newsletter for the volunteers of Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial.

Editor

Dorothy Carns

Supervisory Park Ranger

Frank Cucurullo

Contributors

Kendell Thompson
Dorothy Carns
Delphine Gross
Karen Kinzey

NPS Photographers

Keith Drews

Comments? Write to:

Kendell Thompson, Site Manager
Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial
c/o George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

Volunteers Needed

The roster of active volunteers is in dire need of additional names! If you know anyone interested in joining our ranks please refer them to Delphine Gross, Volunteer Coordinator (703) 235-1530 ext 227.

